

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1-3 (Canceled):

Claim 4 (Previously Presented). A diffraction element comprising:

a substrate with an incoming-side surface opposite to an outgoing-side surface, the incoming-side surface configured to receive light from a light source external to the substrate;

an incoming-side diffraction grating having a concave/convex shape in cross-section disposed in a central region of the incoming-side surface;

a first outgoing-side diffraction grating having a concave/convex shape in cross-section disposed in the outgoing-side surface and configured to receive light not diffracted by the incoming-side diffraction grating; and

a second outgoing-side diffraction grating covered by a reflective layer and having a concave/convex shape in cross-section, the second outgoing-side diffraction grating positioned on a light path of a light diffracted by said incoming-side diffraction grating, a grating pitch of the incoming-side diffraction grating being substantially equal to a grating pitch of the second outgoing-side diffraction grating,

wherein the incoming-side diffraction grating is configured relative to the light source such that only a center portion of the external light, having a stronger intensity than a peripheral portion of the external light, is not diffracted by the incoming side diffraction grating.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The diffraction element according to Claim 4, wherein the second outgoing-side diffraction grating forms a reflection type diffraction grating.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The diffraction element according to Claim 5, wherein the second outgoing-side diffraction grating has a saw-tooth concave/convex portion or a pseudo sawtooth diffraction grating wherein a saw-tooth shape is approximated by stairs.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The diffraction element according to Claim 5, wherein the second outgoing-side diffraction grating comprises a pseudo sawtooth diffraction grating having a saw-tooth shape approximated by stairs, and a height or depth of a first step of the stairs is different from a height or depth of a second step of the stairs.

Claim 8-14 (Cancelled)

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The diffraction element according to Claim 4, wherein the incoming side diffraction grating and the first outgoing-side diffraction grating are arranged in a main axis of the external light, both diffraction gratings being centered on the substrate.

Claim 16 (Cancelled).